

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

***Hofmannophila pseudospretella* (Stainton) breeding in commercial slug killer.**—Sokoloff (1989) briefly recorded breeding this species from slug pellets. We report here a similar occurrence. Early in 1988 J.L. opened up a biscuit tin in which he had stored a quantity of a commercial slug killer (trade name Draza). This had not been disturbed for about 5 years. Inside were found a large quantity of larvae and some adult moths. These were identified for us as *H. pseudospretella* by Dr Adrian Riley of Rothamsted Experimental Station.

The original label on the slug killer described it as 'metaldehyde with an animal repellent'. We are not sure if the moths were completing their development on the metaldehyde, or whether there was bran or similar mixed with the slug pellets to act as a slug attractant. The colony had died out by January 1989.

The larvae of *H. pseudospretella* are known to feed on seeds, dried plants, wool, skins, dead insects, frass, books etc (Emmet, 1979). It is an unusual turn to have a pest species living entirely on a pesticide!—P.R. Holmes, Nature Conservancy Council, Plas Gogerddan, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3EE, and J. Lewis, Hafod-y-Bryn, Bryn Road, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 2 EJ.

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- Emmet, A.M. (ed.) 1979. *A field guide to the smaller British Lepidoptera*. BENHS, London.
Sokoloff, P. 1989. Exhibit at BENHS Annual Exhibition. *Br. J. Ent. nat. Hist.* 2, 41.

***Trachys troglodytes* Gyllenhal (Coleoptera: Buprestidae) widespread in the Cotswold limestone grasslands of Gloucestershire.**— This beetle has always been regarded as something of a rarity despite the general frequency of its larval foodplant devil's-bit scabious throughout Britain. Recent investigation of its distribution in the unimproved limestone grasslands of the Cotswold Hills however suggests that here at least it is widespread and occurs largely wherever its foodplant is plentiful in the sward.

It was first discovered in Gloucestershire by E.G. Neal, who found two adults at Marsden (SP 010120), 20.vi.1943, where also I.S. Menzies found "4 or 5 on leaves regularly on summer afternoon, 1944-45" (Atty, 1983). These remained the only records for the county until P.J. Hodge (pers. comm.) found it while sieving moss and dry grass in an area of scrubby grassland on the Bathurst Estate near Cirencester (SO 973045), 22.v.1983, and it has been found there subsequently by I.S. Carter (pers. comm.), 31.vii.1984.

I visited the latter site, 24.viii.1988, to look for the larval leaf-mines on the foodplant and successfully found a number which were occupied by buprestid larvae. Spurred on by this success, I subsequently visited a number of Cotswold grasslands where devil's-bit flourishes, and again readily found buprestid larvae in leaf-mines at each. The sites are: Rodborough Common (SO 856038), 29.viii, St Chloe's Green (SO 848019), 7.ix, Oakridge Lynch (SO 911032), 8.ix, Oakridge (SO 916031), 16.ix, and Ravensgate Hill (SO 982185), also 16.ix. The relative ease with which these additional localities were found strongly suggests that the species is widespread on the Cotswolds, and that searching for the larval leaf-mines in late summer and early autumn—when the devil's-bit is in flower and easily spotted—is much the most productive way of discovering whether or not the species is present on a particular site.

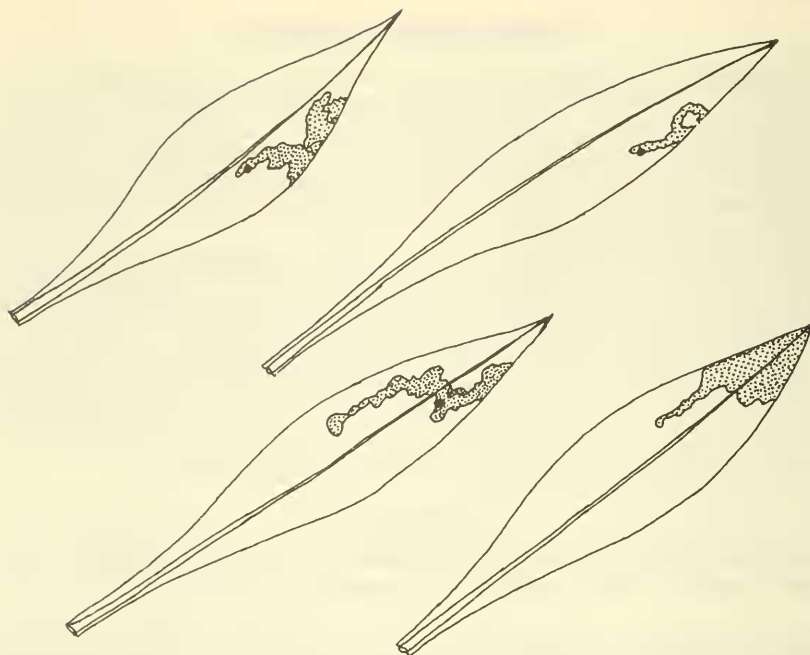


Fig. 1. Various leaf-mines of *Trachys troglodytes* found on devil's-bit scabious in Cotswold grasslands.

The leaf-mine is of a generally characteristic form, being a full depth blotch, occasionally elongated, and generally with a shiny black spot at the start of the mine (J. Robbins, pers. comm.)—see Fig. 1. As other insect species produce leaf mines on devil's-bit scabious, the identification should be confirmed by checking that the larva inside the mine is a *Trachys* sp.—one is illustrated in Bily (1982).

My thanks to D.K. Clements for his illustration of various *Trachys troglodytes* leaf-mines, to J. Robbins for the use of his *Provisional keys to the identification of the British leaf-miners*, and to P.J. Hodge and I.S. Carter for the details of their unpublished records.—K.N.A. Alexander, 22 Cecily Hill, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2EF.

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 Bily, S. 1982. The buprestidae (Coleoptera) of Fennoscandia and Denmark. *Fauna Ent. Scand.* 10.

A second Gloucestershire locality for *Macroplax preysleri* (Fieber) (Heteroptera: Lygaeidae). — A single *Macroplax preysleri* was taken on Daneway Banks (SO 941038) in the Cotswold Hills, 28.iv. 1989, by sieving moss and grass litter on a steep south-east facing slope. The turf was open, with patches of bare ground amongst the tufty sward. Common rock-rose was plentiful — the bug is believed to be associated with this plant. The only other known locality in the country is Rodborough